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Celebrity Buzz

Spelling basking in 'mama' hood

pg 18

Attention
all Aliens!
TALK 1410AM
The Buzz of Vancouver
presents
Coast to Coast AM host
George Noory
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PHOTO COURTESY OF EUS

A VW Beetle shell hangs from the Lions Gate Bridge in Feb. '08.

Students fail to engineer VW bug prank

TRADITION University of B.C. engineering students were arrested when their annual prank ended up at the bottom of Burrard Inlet yesterday.

Shortly after 4 a.m., the students attempted to lower the shell of a Volkswagen Beetle down the side of the Ironworkers Memorial Bridge. One of the cables snapped and the car plunged into the water.

Vancouver police are recommending charges of mischief over $5,000.

According to Chris McCann, president of the Engineering Undergraduate Society at UBC, it's been a tradition since 1981 to kick-off Engineering Week with a prank.

"Engineering students at UBC feel it's a good way to showcase some ingenuity and creativity and to highlight some engineering structures and accomplishments," he said.

Bruce Dunwoody, associate dean of engineering, said students had been more socially responsible in the past.

"This was not one of those incidences," Dunwoody said. "One year they made a structure in front of the Vancouver food bank … and they donated a thousand cans that way."

TARYN MCELHERAN
/FOR METRO VANCOUVER

Success

- In 2001, UBC engineering students hung a VW Beetle off of the Golden Gate Bridge in California with the letter E and a Canadian flag.

Deficits for B.C.: Premier

Legislature being recalled to halt balanced budget for 2 yrs

JEFF HODSON
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British Columbia will dip into the red in 2009 and will post back-to-back deficits as the province wades through troubled economic waters, Premier Gordon Campbell said yesterday.

"I've been pretty clear — I hate deficits. I think they take away from future generations," said Campbell, adding he has always rallied against deficits in his two decades in public life.

"In these difficult times, we all have to take actions that reach beyond ideology to protect the services that are essential in the short term."

JEFF HODSON/METRO VANCOUVER

Finance Minister Colin Hansen, front, and Premier Gordon Campbell at the premier's office in Vancouver yesterday.

Campbell, who referred to B.C. as a "deficit-free zone" in his televised economic address in October, said the legislature would be recalled Feb. 9 to suspend the province's balanced-budget legislation for the next two years.

Finance Minister Colin Hansen would not comment on the size of the projected deficits that he will roll out on Feb. 17, a day after the provincial throne speech.

Economic projections for B.C. dropped to zero growth in January, down from the 0.6 per cent growth forecast in September.

U.S. housing starts, which have a huge impact on B.C.'s forestry sector, dipped to 558,000 units in September, the lowest level yet recorded, Hansen said.

There were also commodity price declines for agriculture, minerals and metals, and oil and natural gas.

New Democrat Leader Carole James said in a news release that the premier was in denial about B.C.'s plummeting revenues and has "wasted hundreds of millions of dollars on pet projects like the B.C. Place roof, Olympic cost overruns and taxpayer-financed advertising campaigns."

Aboriginal Pavilion **Unveiling for 2010**

JEFF HODSON/METRO VANCOUVER

Alex Wells performs a hoop dance at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre yesterday during the unveiling of the 2010 Aboriginal Pavilion. The pavilion will showcase aboriginal culture and arts during the Olympic Games. Story, pg 4

Home prices expected to fall 13% in 2009

REALTY The average price of a home in British Columbia is expected to decline 13 per cent this year, according to the B.C. Real Estate Association 2009 forecast released yesterday.

"The global financial crisis and worldwide recession will continue to take their toll on the B.C. economy this year," said Cameron Muir, BCREA chief economist.

The average home price is forecast to drop to $396,600 as nine per cent fewer residences are expected to sell in 2009.

According to Muir, prices and sales are expected to stabilize in 2010.

METRO VANCOUVER

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Local pg 3

Round 2 of 2010 drills

Health pg 15

Tummy tucks on the rise

RRSP Guide pg 12

Most lacking financial plan

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World's first high-def CT scanner
St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver is the first in Canada to scan patients with the world's first high-definition CT scanner. It provides faster and more detailed imaging, and delivers up to 83 per cent less radiation for cardiac scans than previous CT scanners. METRO VANCOUVER

Local

Peters to name Juno nominees

Nominations for the 2009 Juno Awards, taking place in Vancouver on March 29, will be announced live on CTV today beginning at 7:30 a.m. Juno host and Gemini Award-winner Russell Peters, left, will oversee the announcement. METRO VANCOUVER

News in brief

VERDICT A Delta man was found guilty yesterday of second-degree murder in the death of his two-year-old daughter, news1130.com reports. Lakhvinder Kahlon, 47, was subsequently sentenced to life in prison. Details about how the little girl died have not been released. A parole eligibility hearing will take place Thursday.
METRO NEWS SERVICES

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What's online today.

Your Money Allan Small on worries and opportunities in the banking sector at **metronews.ca/investing**

Video Students defy odds by making contact with space station for school project at **metronews.ca/canada**

Blogs Hollywood Rants about great books made into awful films at **metronews.ca/**

Exercise Silver goes for gold

RCMP, military to hold Olympic security simulations starting next week

KRISTEN THOMPSON
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If you see an increase in the number of military crafts in the skies and waters and on land around Vancouver next week, there's no need for alarm.

The second of three full-scale security exercises ahead of the 2010 Olympics is beginning on Feb. 9 in Whistler and the Lower Mainland.

Exercise Silver, a series of drills taking place over 10 days, is designed to test security, safety and emergency responses to incidents that might arise during the Games, said RCMP Assistant Commissioner Bud Mercer, COO of the V2010 integrated security unit.

The program includes around 1,000 participants from all levels of government, police, military and emergency services.

"Scenarios include criminal (and terrorist) activity, weather, health, seismic, marine and aviation (problems)," Mercer said.

In one exercise, personnel will perform pedestrian and vehicle screening tests at the ISU Four Continents figure skating championships, which started yesterday in Vancouver.

Rear Admiral Tyrone Pile, with the Canadian Forces, said Olympics security is often called the "largest and most complex" peacetime security effort in the world.

"Success comes not only from planning but practice," he said. "Exercise Silver coincides with the one-year countdown to the Games to practise in environmental conditions similar to those we'll see a year from now."

KRISTEN THOMPSON/METRO VANCOUVER

RCMP Assistant Commissioner Bud Mercer stands in front of a Griffin helicopter at Stanley Park yesterday. The helicopter is one of the military crafts being used for a series of Olympic security exercises.

VANCOUVER 2010 Games

Lt.-Gov. grateful for community support after fire

SUSPICIOUS British Columbia's lieutenant-governor said he is thankful for the public support his family has received after their Chilliwack home was gutted in a suspicious fire.

"Our friends, neighbours and everyone in the community have reached out to us in so many ways and we appreciate and thank them for their support and assistance," Steven Point said in a news release yesterday.

The RCMP also announced they will not take any chances.

"A threat assessment has been carried out," Cpl. Peter Thiessen said. "Additional security will be provided for Lt.-Gov. Steven Point and his family on a day-to-day basis."

He added that investigators have met with Point to establish a motive for Sunday's suspected arson and several theories are being investigated.
METRO VANCOUVER

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98 B-line bus getting dropped?

The 98 B-Line bus that runs from downtown Vancouver to Richmond Centre will likely be eliminated when the Canada Line opens in November. TransLink plans to cut the route, along with several others connecting Vancouver to Richmond, Delta and White Rock, to encourage commuters to use the new train. **NEWS1130.COM**

Inquiry hears Dziekanski translation

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INQUIRY Video footage of YVR's international meet-and-greet area, taken at the time of Robert Dziekanski's death, provides almost no sign of the chaos going on behind the glass partition where the Polish immigrant died.

The grainy surveillance footage was played yesterday at the Braidwood inquiry into Dziekanski's death.

Also ...

- Robert Dziekanski also asked police if they were crazy.

It showed a predominantly quiet section of the arrivals lounge from 1 a.m. to 2 a.m., while RCMP officers, paramedics and firefighters struggled behind a frosted glass door to revive Dziekanski after he was Tasered by police.

The video shows Dziekanski was Tasered within one minute of the officers' arrival, while Richmond Fire and Rescue arrived on the scene 13 minutes later.

The inquiry also listened to a translation of the audiotape recorded minutes before Dziekanski died.

Translator Kris Barski told the inquiry that Dziekanski, who only spoke Polish, swore, asked to be left alone and wanted to know how long he would be waiting. Barski also said Dziekanski threatened to wreck the arrivals area.

FOUR HOST FIRST NATIONS

An artist's rendering shows the 2010 Aboriginal Pavilion for the Olympic Games.

A lasting legacy?

JEFF HODSON
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VANCOUVER 2010 Games

Musqueam Chief Ernest Campbell said he is disappointed that a pavilion showcasing aboriginal art and culture during the 2010 Games is temporary and not a permanent structure in Vancouver.

"The initial plan was a permanent building," said Campbell following the unveiling of the 2010 Aboriginal Pavilion yesterday morning.

"It would have been good recognition to have a lasting legacy ongoing after 2010," added Campbell, who estimates a permanent facility would have cost $20 million.

The $3.5-million pavilion will be located within the Queen Elizabeth Theatre plaza, across Cambie Street from one of the live celebration sites planned for Vancouver.

The 8,000-square foot plaza will centre around a 20-metre high inflated sphere and will promote aboriginal culture, art, business and sport.

News in brief

FUNDING The Olympic Village project might have become $60 million more expensive because of the exchange rate, news1130.com reports. The developers took out took out a $750-million line of credit in American dollars, intending to swap it back to Canadian dollars to pay contractors. But our dollar's value has dipped 20 per cent in the past two years.

CARBON NDP Leader Carole James said Premier Gordon Campbell should scrap the carbon tax, invest in housing infrastructure and improve student financial aid to help address the province's ailing economy.

VOTING B.C. opened a referendum information office to inform citizens about first-past-the-post and single-transferable-vote electoral systems. The electoral reform referendum is in May.

METRO VANCOUVER

Stabbing victim identified

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CRIME Police have identified the 23-year-old man who was found stabbed to death on the front lawn of a Richmond home.

Benjamin Neil Warland, from Richmond, died early Sunday morning near Cambie Road between Dallyn and Bargen roads.

Benjamin Neil Warland

RCMP Cpl. Dale Carr said investigators have also interviewed two suspects in the alleged assault.

The 24- and 25-year-old Richmond men have been released from custody while police continue the investigation.

"Both men remain as suspects," Carr said yesterday.

"Police have learned that the victim and the two suspects were using public transportation and were involved in a confrontation on the bus," said Carr.

"It has been learned that they were on Bus 41 that left from Richmond Centre at 11:12 p.m. (on) Saturday, and eventually travelled along Cambie Road."

He said it doesn't appear the victim and suspects knew each other, or that the alleged assault was motivated by drugs or organized crime.

Investigators are asking anyone who was at the bus stop at Richmond Centre or who travelled on the bus at that time to call 1-866-373-7886.

Flower shops in full bloom

TARYN MCELHERAN
for Metro Vancouver

VANCOUVER 2010 Games

OLYMPICS The opportunity to supply the bouquets for winning athletes during the 2010 Vancouver Olympics has blossomed for two local flower shops.

Margitta's Flowers in North Vancouver and Just Beginnings Flowers and School of Floral Design in Surrey are teaming up to create the bouquets, which are given to all medal winners.

June Strandberg, owner of Just Beginnings, also teaches flower arrangement to low-income women and women who have been in prison at a community centre across from Surrey Memorial Hospital.

Margitta Shulz, owner of Margitta's Flowers, said she believes the community involvement helped the selection.

"I'm partnered up with somebody who used to work out of the women's prison," Shulz said.

"I think that's one of the reasons why we were chosen and you have to be an all-around good person, which I am, too."

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Lougheed Mall

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North Vancouver

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Rock 'n' roller Buddy Holly died in plane crash 50 years ago today

One snowy night 50 years ago today, Buddy Holly took off on a small plane and died when it crashed in an Iowa field. A tragic icon was born, but so was a half-century of litigation and finger-pointing. The latest legal showdown has been going on for 15 years as Holly's family chases alleged unpaid royalties from his Universal Music Group label. REUTERS

Canada/World

Massacre movie brings up painful memories

It's at the end of the film, after the killer shoots himself and the blood draining from his head meets with the blood pooling from yet another woman he has killed, that the impact this event has had on society begins to resonate.

"I was very scared to go watch it. But they succeeded, I believe." Melissa Blais, student

The event, the massacre of 14 women by 25-year-old Marc Lépine at the École Polytechnique on Dec. 6, 1989, would turn a population upside down and forever link Lépine's hatred with the pain of the victims' families and the debate about the status of women in Quebec, and the rest of Canada.

Predictably, there has been controversy about its release. On Internet forums and in newspapers, some wonder why the filmmakers would dredge up such a painful piece of history. Some have complained that the movie's trailers have sensationalized the events.

But those who have seen the $6-million film's previews say it's highly emotive, not exploitive.

"I was very scared to go watch it," said Melissa Blais, a doctorate student in sociology at the University of Quebec at Montreal who has been studying the massacre since 2004. "But they succeeded, I believe."

The viewer is not spared the violence. The movie shows what even led to some of the actors breaking down during the production, when the killer enters one classroom and allows all the men to leave before he shoots all the "feminists" who remain.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

9 dead in hospital shelling in Sri Lanka

Artillery shells struck a hospital in Sri Lanka's northern war zone, killing at least nine people and wounding another 20, the Red Cross said yesterday.

The Sri Lankan military denied it had shelled Puthukkudiyiruppu hospital in a Tamil Tiger-held part of Mullaittivu district and blamed the rebels.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) made no comment, but a pro-rebel website accused the military of the firing.

A spokeswoman said the Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had urged both sides to allow safe passage for scores of sick and wounded people trapped in the area.

Sri Lanka's army has surrounded the LTTE in a 300-square kilometre slice of jungle in the northeast, aiming to end a war that began in 1983, one of Asia's longest-running conflicts.

Concern has grown for the safety of 250,000 people aid agencies say are trapped inside the battle zone, although the government describes those numbers as overblown. The military has said it would move in to free those trapped by the fighting after a government-declared, 48-hour truce lapsed.

A UN official said there would have been many casualties because the hospital was crowded when the shelling occured. REUTERS

Ontario **We have contact!**

CHRIS SO/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Humber students Patrick Neelin, from left, Paul Je, Prof. Mark Rector, Kevin Luong and Gino Cunti celebrate a successful contact with the International Space Station with equipment which the students built. It's believed these Toronto students are the first who have been able to contact the space station with self-built equipment.

Japan denies use of weapons on whaling activists

WILDLIFE Japan yesterday denied accusations by a U.S.-based anti-whaling group that Japanese whaling ships used weapons against activists on inflatable boats near Antarctica.

The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society said that two crew members were injured when Japanese whalers used water cannons, concussion grenades, acoustic weapons and threw objects at their boats.

A fisheries department representative said the Japanese fleet had used hoses on two Sea Shepherd boats after sending warnings, accusing Sea Shepherd crew members of throwing bottles of dye and strong-smelling liquid at its boats. No one was injured, the rep said.

Despite a commercial whaling ban, Japan continues what it calls a scientific whaling program, which has drawn criticism. Its annual hunt is aimed at catching about 900 whales. REUTERS

Britain **Record snowfall**

STEPHEN HIRD/REUTERS

Pedestrians walk past a snow-covered war memorial yesterday in central London. Tens of thousands of commuters were told not to journey into London, which experienced some of its worst snow in almost 20 years. Buses were taken off the roads and hundreds of schools were closed. All flights at Heathrow Airport were cancelled before limited flights resumed.

News in brief

POLITICS The House of Commons voted 214 to 84 last night in favour of a federal budget amendment that the Liberals had demanded in order for them to support the budget itself, CBC News Online reports. The amendment, presented by Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff, will require regular reports to Parliament on the budget's implementation and costs. The reports are expected in March, June and December.

QUEBEC A trial began in Montreal yesterday for Said Namouh, a Quebec man accused of being involved in an international terror plot designed to force the Austrian and German governments to withdraw troops from Afghanistan.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Civil liberties group stands up for pro-life advocates

RIGHTS Free speech versus a woman's right to choose: The issue is coming to a head — again — on university campuses across Canada.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association is campaigning to overturn decisions by several student unions to withdraw funding and resources from pro-life organizations.

The civil liberties group, though "strongly pro-choice" on abortion, says the students' move violates an even more important democratic right — freedom of expression.

"At issue, in our view, is nothing less than the viability of free speech on the university campuses of this country," the civil liberties group's general counsel, Alan Borovoy, writes in a letter that was sent to student unions across Canada. It notes that the right to free speech gave many pro-choice groups their start on campuses. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

"At issue ... is nothing less than the viability of free speech." Alan Borovoy

15 policemen killed in India

REBELS Suspected Maoist rebels killed 15 policemen in the western Indian state of Maharashtra, police said yesterday, in one of the biggest such attacks in the state.

The rebels fired upon a police team patrolling a forested area near the border of the insurgency-hit Chhattisgarh state. The Indian Express newspaper said the rebels gouged out the eyes and severed the legs of a few policemen.

Maoist rebels say they are fighting for the rights of poor farmers and labourers in what Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh called one of the gravest threats to India's internal security. REUTERS

News in brief

BOGOTA A mission to airlift two kidnapped politicians held hostage by Marxist guerrillas deep in Colombia's jungle was delayed yesterday, but a senator said it would still go ahead. Leftist FARC guerrillas freed four hostages on Sunday in the first of three releases planned this week, but complained of military harassment during the handover. REUTERS

Boomers rising force in fitness
Baby boomers are set to take over the fitness industry, as the 77.5-million-strong market will increase by about 25 per cent in the next eight years. The group is expected to spend more than $70 billion US on ways to stave off the aging process. REUTERS

Business

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EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Bank CEOs take year-end pay cuts

The top executives at three of Canada's biggest banks are taking deep pay cuts after the financial crisis eroded profits and battered stocks.

Royal Bank of Canada's chief executive officer Gordon Nixon announced yesterday that he is voluntarily turning down nearly $5 million in 2008 compensation.

His counterpart at the Bank of Nova Scotia, Richard Waugh, saw his pay package slashed by 20 per cent to $7.5 million from $10.1 million last year.

Hours later, Bank of Montreal's CEO William Downe decided to give up $4.1 million in rewards.

Those rare moves are coming at a time when some shareholders are pushing for a say on executive compensation, while taxpayers ratchet up their scrutiny of the issue after Ottawa committed billions to shore up lending in last week's federal budget.

Ian de Verteuil, an analyst with BMO Capital Markets, said in a note that the move gives RBC added credibility, as Nixon "intends to share in the 'pain' experienced by the bank's stakeholders."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Bank earnings

- Royal Bank's full-year profits sank by 17 per cent to $4.56 billion.
- Scotiabank's 2008 annual profits dropped to $3.14 billion from $4.05 billion.

Indonesia **Ban ignites debate**

SIGIT PAMUNGKAS/REUTERS

Workers roll cigarettes at a factory in Sidoarjo, East Java province, yesterday. The company said cigarette production has decreased after the Ulema Council issued a fatwa prohibiting smoking in public places and by pregnant women and children — a move welcomed by campaigners but criticized as interference in private lives by smokers and the tobacco industry.

In **brief**

SETTLEMENT Maple Leaf Foods has reached a tentative $25-million settlement in a series of class-action lawsuits related to an outbreak of listeriosis. The amount each claimant will be paid depends on severity of illness, ranging from $750 to $125,000. Estates of those who died will be paid $120,000.

LENDING Canwest Global Communications said the slumping economy could force its newspaper and TV unit, Canwest Media, to breach some debt covenants as its bank cut the amount of money it is willing to lend. REUTERS

Protectionism is 'economic death'

ECONOMY Dallas Federal Reserve president Richard Fisher warned yesterday against "Buy American" provisions in U.S. President Barack Obama's proposed $819-billion US stimulus law and said they could lead to devastating protectionism.

"Protectionism is the crack cocaine of economics," Fisher told C-Span television. "It provides an immediate high that leads to economic death. We cannot afford to go down that route." REUTERS

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Tax treats for homebuyers

MoneyMatters

Henry Choo Chong
choochonghcga@yahoo.ca

Q Over the past four years, my wife and I have contributed to our RRSPs. Soon, we plan to purchase our first home. Is this a good time to buy or should we wait another year or two? Can we withdraw the maximum $20,000 under the Home Buyer's Plan?

Sondeep

A The Canadian real estate market continues to show sale and price declines. Although most experts do not expect a U.S.-style meltdown, a significant price reduction is expected. If you plan to live in the home, real estate will always be a good investment. Our federal government has made several initiatives to stimulate the housing sector.

First-Time Home Buyers:

• New-increase! The RRSP Home Buyers Plan withdrawal limits per individual have increased to $25,000 from $20,000, effective Jan. 27, 2009.

• New-tax credit! After Jan. 27, 2009, homebuyers that have not owned a home in the current year or four preceding years may qualify for a $5,000 non-refundable tax credit.

Existing Homeowners:

• New-Ontario Senior Homeowners' Property Tax Grant! Senior homeowners can apply for $250 grant in 2009 and $500 in 2010 when filing their current income tax return.

There's more available: Check with a tax adviser.

Reach Henry Choo Chong, CGA, at choochonghcga@yahoo.ca.

Catching a tax break

SmartCookies

smartcookies.com

A week ago, the federal government unveiled the long awaited 2009 budget. Last year, with the introduction of the Tax Free Savings Account, the government was all about encouraging us to save — this year's message, however, is the opposite.

But before you run out and spend, spend, spend, read on to learn more about what this year's budget means to your bottom line.

With $40 billion in economic stimulus over the next two years, Canadians will now have more money in their pockets.

Tax breaks are being introduced across the board: The largest ones for Canadians who have the least, including low-income families and seniors. And for many Canadian families who have or will experience layoffs, the government has added an extra five weeks to the number of weeks an individual can receive in employment insurance and $1.5 billion is also being injected into job retraining programs.

The government estimates that 190,000 jobs will be created or saved, and the economy will grow by one per cent over the next two years, because of these and other initiatives.

We've also seen incentives for higher income families, which along with the aforementioned income tax breaks, include credits such as the home renovation tax credit. This year, a $1,350 credit is being offered to those who spend between $1,000 and $10,000 on home improvements.

Although we have seen dips in the real estate market, Smart Cookies still feel that real estate is one of the best investments you can make (provided you have the money for the down payment, can cover the monthly expenses and plan to stay in your home for at least three to five years).

This is why we are impressed to hear about incentives for first time homebuyers. The proposed budget includes a new first time homebuyers tax credit of $750 and an increase of $5,000 on what you can borrow from your RRSP for your down payment (taking to total up to $25,000).

What does all this mean to you? At the end of the day, a small tax credit is not going to make that much of a difference to your bottom line.

While it is great that Canadians will have more money in their pockets, we still have to be cautious as to where we are spending our money. Although it might help the economy if you go out and shop, renovate or purchase property, it's not going to advance you personally unless you can truly afford it.

Check out Smart Cookies on W Network, Mondays at 10:30 p.m. and visit smartcookies.com for more information on creating a spending plan, cutting debt and keeping your credit score high.

If you have questions or suggestions for the Smart Cookies, we'd love to hear them. E-mail us at smartcookies@metronews.ca.

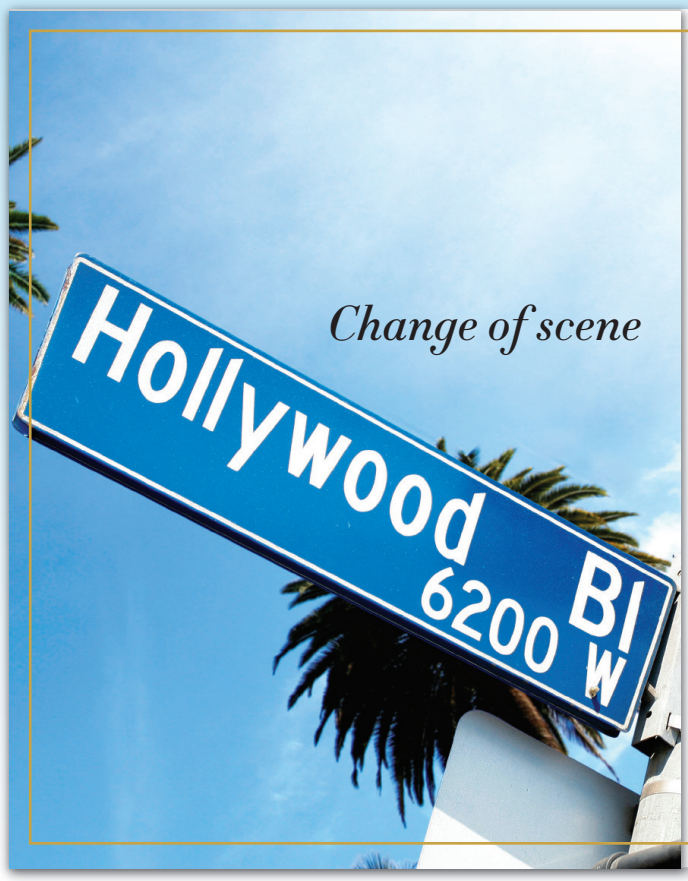
Tune in Monday nights at 10:30 p.m. EST/PST on the W Network and be sure to visit smartcookies.com for more tips.

Investing

Allan Small

What opportunities are out there for investors? Read this week's column at metronews.ca

AIR CANADA VACATIONS



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Comment & Views

Comment

The tides have turned

Harper's liberal budget draws backlash from Conservatives

NationalReport

Lawrence Martin

For the first time as prime minister, Stephen Harper is facing public criticism from within his own flock. His sometimes-strategist Tom Flanagan told interviewer Steve Paikin last week that Mr. Harper has dug himself into a hole, primarily on account of last November's budget update. Monte Solberg, who used to serve in the Harper cabinet, said the PM's budget could lead to long-term deficits and criticized Mr. Harper for not offering the country a vision. Tasha Kheirridin of the Fraser Institute said conservatives feel betrayed by his budget.

For the strong-armed PM who once exerted absolute control, the lustre has worn off. His defenders say he had no choice but to bring in a liberal budget, that his minority would have been defeated if he had done otherwise. That may be true. But the no-choice scenario is one that was largely brought on by Mr. Harper himself.

His strategic budget-statement disaster of November reset the scales in the other side's favour. It resulted in a quick change in the Liberal leadership. Without that change, Liberals would presently be engaged in a divisive leadership fight. Mr. Harper would have had a free hand with the budget and other measures. It was his own failure to foresee the dismal economic tides (when most everyone else foresaw them) that led to his miscalculation of promising balanced budgets for years to come. He had to completely reverse himself. It was his government's excessive spending in the two years prior that needlessly depleted the big surpluses Ottawa previously enjoyed.

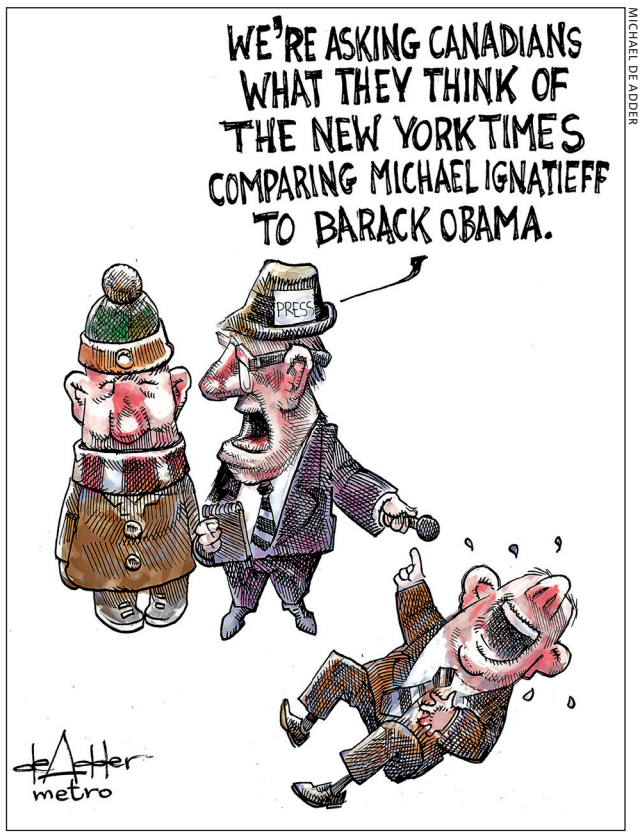
With the trend swinging liberal to the south for the border and edging in that direction here, Mr. Harper realizes he has to start sounding more and more liberal to survive. He has to turn his back on his own hard-woven political philosophy. He can do that. He is a leader driven by power-lust and political calculations far more than public policy. Hence the Solberg criticism, echoed by many others, on his never having offered the country a vision.

REUTERS

But the problem in such circumstances is that given a choice between a faux liberal in Stephen Harper and a real one in Michael Ignatieff, people will opt for the real one.

The momentum is clearly on Mr. Ignatieff's side. Sensing this, realizing Mr. Harper has already had three electoral kicks at the can, Conservatives are starting to contemplate alternatives. Jim Prentice, Peter MacKay and Jason Kenney are the names most frequently mentioned. There is also a former leader of the federal Tories who is still at large in Quebec. His name is Jean Charest.

Lawrence Martin is a Globe and Mail correspondent and author who writes about national affairs from Ottawa.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Views

Relief at pumps, but havoc on economy

InBusiness

Charles Davies

Veteran Business Writer

These are hard times in Canada's oil patch. With crude hovering around $40 a barrel after averaging $100 through 2008, profits are slumping and belts are tightening. Earlier this week, Suncor Energy Inc., the leading oilsands producer and a bellwether for the energy sector, reported a fourth quarter loss of $215 million. It promptly whacked planned 2009 capital spending to $3 billion, less than a third of last year's total.

Canadians who were squeezed by historically high gasoline prices last year may have little sympathy, but they should. Today's lower pump prices are a relief, but the industry's slowdown has a far greater negative impact on all of us. Lower energy prices, the result of weakening demand as the recession gathers, mean weaker corporate revenues from domestic and export sales and, consequently, lower profitability. This leads to job cuts, reduced purchases from suppliers across the country, less capital-fuelled expansion and trimmed discretionary spending on everything from paper clips to philanthropy. The energy sector's weakness simply diminishes an already struggling economy, rather like bleeding a medieval invalid.

In Alberta, the key producing province, the number of oil rigs operating this year is the lowest in a decade. The province suffered a net loss of 15,800 jobs in December, nearly half the national total. Not all of those jobs were in the energy sector, but many were, and they generated income for thousands of Canadians who once hailed from locales as diverse as Newfoundland outports and hamlets on Vancouver Island. Worse still, the energy sector's workforce is expected to shrink a lot more in 2009. Add it all up and energy's contribution to gross domestic product, somewhere around 5.5 per cent normally, is taking a big hit.

Indirectly, the effects are no less severe. Alberta has collected $11 billion or more in energy royalties in each of the past three years, but it won't in 2009. Nor will other producing provinces match their previous totals. Provincial gasoline tax revenues, 16.5 per cent of the price of every litre sold, will fall, as will the 15.5 per cent share comprised of federal excise tax and GST. Lower tax revenues in the current climate mean bigger deficits and even harder choices for governments figuring out how to revive the economy.

For good measure, lower energy prices are further eroding our life savings. By weighting, the energy sector accounts for about 28 per cent of the S&P/TSX composite index. When energy shares fall, all investors feel the pain.

Charles Davies is a veteran business writer and editor who has worked for news organizations and publications including Business Week, Canadian Business, Report On Business magazine, Reuters, and Financial Post.

Letters

Burrard Bridge bike lanes worth a trial

Re: Derek Moscato's column: City Should Switch Gears on Bridge Bike Plan (Feb. 2).

Derek Moscato assumes there will be increased traffic congestion on the Burrard Bridge and therefore justification for motorist backlash. But during the last lane re-allocation trial in 1996, traffic resolved itself in a matter of days. The trial was cancelled based on the mayhem of the first day, caused in great part by the city's failure to communicate the trial to the motoring public. Also, should there be any additional traffic congestion, buses will have queue jumper lanes to bypass it.

The current bike/pedestrian lanes on the Burrard Bridge don't meet national safety standards, so crashes are more likely inevitable rather than caused by aggressiveness. A trial is the most fiscally, socially and environmentally responsible thing to do. How else can we know if it will be a perfect solution and save the taxpayers millions?

RON VAN DER EERDEN, VANCOUVER

Do as I say, not as I did

I find it rich that Jack Layton and the NDP are acting so indignant that Michael Ignatieff is supporting the Conservative budget. It was, after all, their support for Harper in 2006 that led to the fall of the Martin government, and the rise of the Conservatives in power. Why is it wrong for Ignatieff to support the Conservatives now, but right for Layton to support them then?

I think Layton knows Canadians will never elect the NDP to power, so they tried to sneak in the back door. So when Ignatieff chose stability for Canadians, instead of a coalition, Layton acted like a spurned teen and threw a hissy fit.

Canada needs stability to get through the economic trials that we face, Mr. Layton. We don't need your brand of childish antics.

BRIAN APPEL, DARTMOUTH, N.S.

Metro Online Poll Results

45% SAID YES

Did you watch the Super Bowl?

Weigh in on today's question at metronews.ca

55% SAID NO

It's your turn to tell others what you think. E-mail your thoughts and opinions to: vancouverletters@metronews.ca

Letters must include sender's full name, address and phone number – street name and phone numbers will NOT be published. We reserve the right to edit letters.

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Super Bowl XLIII second-most watched NFL game ever
The Pittsburgh Steelers' Super Bowl victory over the Arizona Cardinals drew more than 95 million U.S. television viewers Sunday, down slightly from 2008's big game but still the second-most watched National Football League championship ever. **REUTERS**

Sports

Selig rakes in nearly $17.5M

Baseball commissioner Bud Selig, left, made more than all but three of his sport's players in 2007. Selig received a raise of about $3 million US to nearly $17.5 million that year, according to Major League Baseball's latest tax return. His compensation was listed at $17,470,491 for the 12 months that ended Oct. 31, 2007, according to the return, which is available at guidestar.org. That was up from $14,515,071 in the previous 12 months. METRO NEWS SERVICES

SPORTS@METRONEWS.CA

Show me a real scandal

The media keep making mountains out of molehills

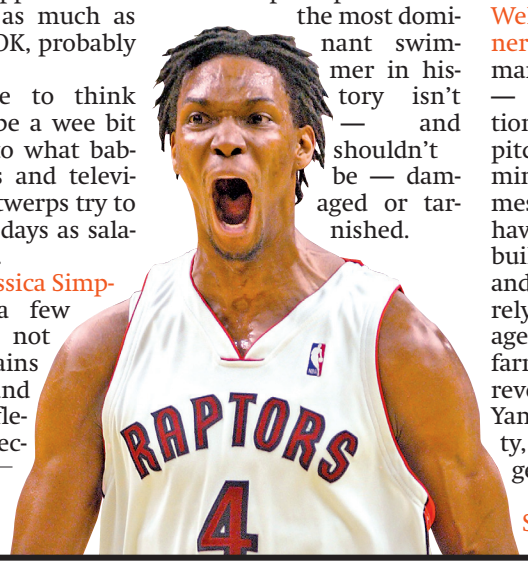
YorkReport

Marty York
marty.york@metronews.ca

After three-plus decades in this racket (yes, I joined the media as a tot), I've learned to appreciate a good scandal as much as the next guy. OK, probably more.

But I'd like to think there should be a wee bit of substance to what babbling bloggers and television's talking twerps try to pass off these days as salacious scandals.

Sorry, but Jessica Simpson adding a few pounds does not merit mountains of copy and hours of bafflegab in the electronic media. It doesn't qualify as a legitimate scandal and neither, frankly, does Michael Phelps smoking pot. This is 2009, for crying out loud. Truth is, his bong may have been wrong but the media throng needs to move along and sing a different song. I don't indulge, never have, but you needn't be a pothead to realize smoking weed is no longer a dastardly deed. And Phelps' reputation as the most dominant swimmer in history isn't — and shouldn't be — damaged or tarnished.



Raptors forward Chris Bosh

Then there's Joe Torre's new book, The Yankee Years, which was supposed to be laden with 475 pages of scandals.

Puh-lease. Torre's lineup cards have contained more controversial writing than his book does. The book's a decent read but nowhere near as steamy as advance coverage pretended. Granted, the ex-Yankees-turned-Dodgers manager fires a few not-so-vicious zings at Alex Rodriguez, David Wells, George Steinbrenner and Yanks general manager Brian Cashman — and there are suggestions that ex-Blue Jays pitchers used amphetamines — but Torre's main message is that the Yanks have evolved from a team built upon draft choices and shrewd trades into one relying on high-priced free agents and neglecting its farm system. There are few revealing passages in The Yankee Years and, in reality, the book is devoid of genuine scandals.

U.S. sports journalist Stephen A. Smith tried to come up with one yesterday about the Raptors' all-star, Chris Bosh. Problem was, it wasn't accurate, always a prerequisite for a good scandal.

Smith claimed Bosh told Raptors management that he has no intention of staying with Toronto when his contract expires after the NBA's 2009-2010 season. Bosh, however, insisted he hasn't even thought about 2010 yet.

Ultimately, he may well follow in the footsteps of ex-Raptors stars Vince Carter, Tracy McGrady, Antonio Davis and others by bolting, but there's nothing to suggest this yet and so, sorry, but the Bosh story is no more scandalous than Torre's book or Phelps' pastime. Or Simpson's weight.

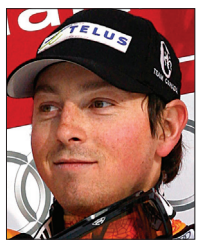
Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of divulging genuine scandals.

Marty York has been a groundbreaking sports columnist and broadcaster in Canada for decades.

Ski team having a rough season

SKIING As he peers through falling snow and overcast skies at the world alpine ski championships, the man charged with helping Canada deliver medals at the 2010 Winter Olympics swears he can still see some sunshine.

Max Gartner, Alpine Canada chief of athletics, is aware that this hasn't been a stellar campaign so far for the Canadian team, particularly on the women's speed side where they excelled last year but have been shut out from the podium so far.



John Kucera

In fact, it looks like Canada will be hard pressed to grab a medal at the worlds, which begin today with the women's super-G in Val d'Isere, France, and run through Feb. 15.

The Speed Queens, the moniker that Britt Janyk, Emily Brydon and Kelly VanderBeek coined for themselves last season when they earned seven podiums, are hurting right now and are also a bit out of sync.

VanderBeek popped both shoulders out in a crash in Italy just over a week ago, while Brydon also crashed there and has been battling the flu. Janyk has been healthy, but nowhere near as sharp as last season when she was third in the World Cup downhill standings. She has one top-10 result in seven speed races this season.

"Our girls are a little banged up," said Gartner, in a telephone interview from France. "Not exactly the best preparation going into here."

Canada's best chance is likely to come in the men's super-G with Erik Guay and John Kucera.

But Gartner remains optimistic about the 2010 Games. He points to the return of downhiller Jan Hudec, who finished eighth in his first race back from knee surgery in Switzerland. Manuel Osborne-Paradis, Guay and Kucera have each been on the podium this season.

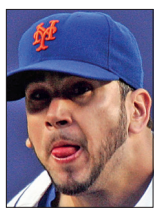
Gartner also believes the men's slalom team, headed by Michael Janyk, has taken a big step forward.

"I still think we have the weapons to do what we want to do," he said. "Our target is still to win three to four medals there (in 2010) and I still think we can do that."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Mets ink Perez to 3-year, $36M deal

MLB The New York Mets have reportedly agreed to a three-year contract with left-handed pitcher Oliver Perez.



Oliver Perez

According to the New York Post, the deal is worth $36 million US and will be finalized once Perez passes a physical.

Last season, the 27-year-old Perez went 10-7 with a 4.22 earned-run average in 34 starts. Perez also struck out 180 batters in 194 innings. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Senators axe coach Hartsburg

TIM WIECLAWSKI
Metro Canada

NHL With 34 games left in the season and the team wallowing near the bottom of the league standings, the Ottawa Senators have fired head coach Craig Hartsburg.

Cory Clouston, 39, head coach of the Sens' AHL affiliate in Binghamton, will step behind the bench for the remainder of the season. Senators general manager Bryan Murray said he made the switch because he felt the team had not been making any progress in the last few games, particularly after Sunday's loss to Washington.

"He understood," Murray said about his conversation with Craig Hartsburg. "He was apologetic a little bit in that he didn't get the team to play the way he thought he could when he came here."

By making the switch now, Murray said it gives the club enough games before the trade deadline and the end of the season to evaluate the players before making big decisions.

"Now we have to watch the players over the next period of time and decide who stays and who doesn't stay to help us go forward," he said. "We don't have 20 complete players, but we have a core of players that should be much more competitive than they've shown lately."

Murray acknowledged that a playoff spot is a "pretty tough chore" but it's not right to just give up, and the fans and the organization deserve every possible effort to make it into the post-season.

Ottawa Senators' new head coach Cory Clouston, front, and general manager Bryan Murray leave a news conference yesterday. Clouston replaced Craig Hartsburg, who was fired after less than eight months in the job.

Gauthier suspended five games

NHL Los Angeles Kings defenceman Denis Gauthier has been suspended five games without pay for a blow to the head of Montreal's Josh Gorges in a game this past Saturday.

Gauthier was assessed a five-minute major for charging and was given a game misconduct for the hit in the second period of Montreal's 4-3 victory.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports in brief

NHL Pittsburgh Penguins forward Tyler Kennedy has been suspended for one game by the NHL for an altercation Saturday against Toronto.

NHL Despite posting a shutout in his season debut on Saturday, netminder Tuukka Rask has been reassigned to the American Hockey League by the Boston Bruins.

NFL Nancy Neville Adams, who co-owned the Tennessee Titans with her husband, Bud Adams, passed away Sunday night. She was 84.

NFL Carolina Panthers owner Jerry Richardson is resting in a post-operative cardiovascular recovery unit at a Charlotte hospital yesterday after undergoing heart transplant surgery.

NFL Former Mississippi State head coach Sylvester Croom has returned to the NFL as running backs coach with the St. Louis Rams.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Get ready for the market's recovery
Missing the best days of the market recovery can cripple your long-term returns. Rarely can anyone predict the bottom. One way to take advantage of the recovery and lower risk is to "average in" your investments when the markets are low. NEWS CANADA

RRSP Guide

'Don't lose twice'

"We are at or very near the point of maximum pessimism on the markets. It's time to be opportunistic," said Don Reed, president and CEO of Franklin Templeton Investments Corp. "Conditions are ideal to re-invest: Stocks are cheap and the markets are choppy. Investors lost when markets fell. Don't lose twice — be sure to act now before the recovery takes hold." NEWS CANADA

SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE BOMBA, STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

'Pay yourself first'

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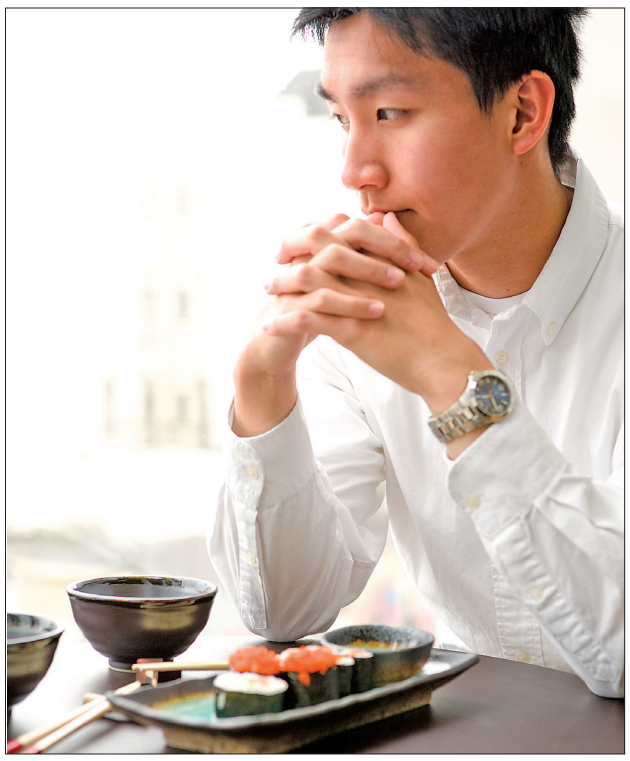

Before you pay money to eat out at a restaurant, pay yourself by putting a portion of your earnings into an RRSP, experts advise.

JON TATTRIE
for Metro Canada

Investing in your RRSP is generally a safe bet, but should you put in a little bit every month, or deposit a lump sum ahead of the March 2 deadline?

"That type of conversation is something that we have with quite a few of our clients," says Lee Ann Davies, head of advanced retirement strategies at the Royal Bank of Canada. "One of the things we're always interested in talking about is getting into the habit of paying yourself first."

Before you pay a salesman to give you a brand-new television, or pay a cook to make you a restaurant meal, pay yourself by socking a portion of your earnings into an RRSP. Most banks have systems set up where you can have a set amount of money automatically transferred from your savings account into your RRSP.

"You don't really notice that your money is being contributed to your investment, because you just get used to that amount being gone." Lee Ann Davies

"You don't really notice that your money is being contributed to your investment, because you just get used to that amount being gone," she said.

In the current volatile market, Davies says regular RRSP investing gives you the advantage of "dollar-cost averaging." You can buy more when it's down and when it's up, you buy less but receive the advantage of the growth on your existing investments.

There are situations in which a lump-sum deposit makes sense, Davies says. She notes many people receive annual bonuses from their employer, or get paid on commission.

"It's also human nature — that tendency to want to procrastinate. That's where a professional adviser is helpful," she says. An adviser can give you solid advice and act as a financial coach, encouraging you to contribute early and build toward long-term goals.

So invest regularly and when a windfall comes your way, throw that in as a lump sum. That may be best placed in your RRSP, or in other investments.

Davies says the question of how much you should put away depends on each person. "It comes down to your life stages, what's happening within your own family. People have all sorts of obligations, especially if they're in young families."

Mortgages and RESPs may take precedence over retirement savings when you divvy up your money. A financial adviser can help provide a "more holistic" view of your situation and find a monthly amount that makes sense for you, she says.

Small investments over a long period of time make a big difference, financial advisers say.

Invest now while market is low: Financial experts

ERIC EMIN WOOD
for Metro Canada

Despite the recent economic downturn, now is the time to open or invest in a registered retirement savings plan (RRSP); it is not the time to walk away, experts say.

"When the market is booming, we're investing like crazy," says Judy Thomson, director of BMO retail investments.

"When the market is where it is today, we're terrified." Such investment psychology is flawed, Thomson says.

"You don't want to just take advantage of investing when it's up, you want to take advantage of investing when it's down and getting back up," she says.

An RRSP is like a basket, says Lee Anne Davies, head of advanced retirement strategies with RBC. "You can have different types of investments in this basket, including mutual funds, GICs, stocks, bonds or cash," she says. Not every item in the basket has been affected the same way.

"We recognize how stressful this time period is for many," says Davies. She encourages both veteran and potential investors to visit their bank's local branch and meet with a professional financial adviser, who can help them assess (or reassess) their goals and investments.

"Do your investments reflect your risk tolerance, goals and time horizon (number of years before you retire)? If so, there may not be a need to change anything."

Fifty per cent of Canadians haven't seen an adviser at all, says Thomson — even though it's free.

"They'll spend more time planning their exercise routine, or a vacation, than thinking about their retirement," she says.

Thomson offers readers this sample plan: A 25-year-old who deposits $100 into an RRSP, she says, followed by $25 per week afterward, will have earned more than $380,000 when they turn 65. (These calculations are made using an average market return of 8 per cent over the long term.) An investment of $50 per week leads to more than $765,000, while $100 per week becomes a little more than $1.5 million.

"Take advantage of investing when (the market is) down and getting back up." Judy Thomson

"We need to get people away from thinking, 'I've got to make such a huge investment!' to 'Small amounts of money over a long period of time make a huge difference,'" says Thomson.

The most important thing is for Canadians to continue moving toward their goals, says Davies. "Retirement's still going to happen," she says. "We know from history that markets come back, so keep investing, and get into the habit of saving on a regular basis."

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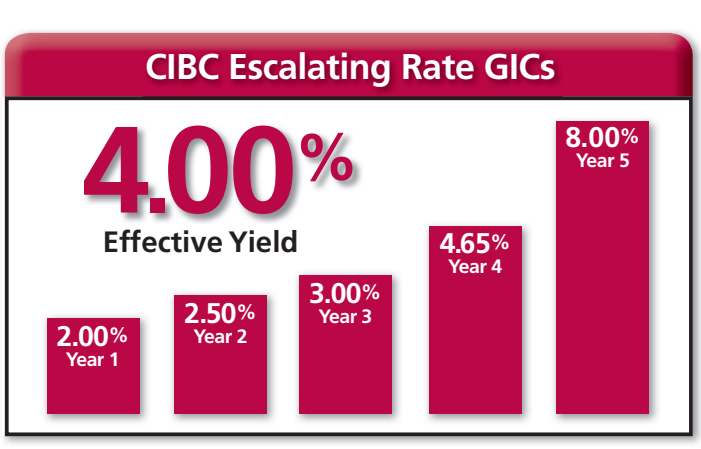

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Spousal RRSPs
Split income to save taxes. In the right situation, a spousal RRSP can still make sense to save taxes in your retirement. NEWS CANADA

More Canadians should be putting money away toward their nest egg because retirement isn't as far away as they may think, experts say.

Most Canadians lack financial plan: Survey

Poll also finds 40 per cent have no savings

BRIAN TOWIE
brian.towie@metronews.ca

"We spend more time thinking about our vacations than we do thinking about our retirement." Judy Thomson

Not even an economic downturn will convince Canadians to save for safety's sake, a survey from Bank of Montreal suggests.

The first of three national reports on spending and saving, which BMO conducted in December and published mid-January, says nearly seven out of 10 respondents admitted they do not have a financial plan in place, and more than 40 per cent of Canadians don't have any type of emergency savings set aside should their financial circumstances suddenly change.

But perhaps the most hackle-raising conclusion of all was that 80 per cent felt the economic downturn is not enough of an incentive to create a financial plan, says Judy Thomson, director of retail investments at BMO.

"Really, what does it take for people to know they need to have some kind of plan in place?" she said. "You'd have to be living in a cave somewhere not to have an understanding of the urgency that's going on in the market today. And these are recent findings, taken after the economy really started to hit people. It certainly surprises me.

"People have no idea of their cash flow — how much they're bringing in, how much they're spending. If they found themselves in an emergency, where would they go?"

There's a certain mindset that keeps Canadians from properly saving and investing, says Thomson. Those without savings plans assume they only exist for the wealthy, and the perilous habit of "get it now and pay for it later" dies hard.

"I think if you read everything about this downturn, it's that attitude that got us into this situation. You can see that across the border when it comes to housing," she said.

"We're avoiding dealing with it and the fact that so many are without a basic financial plan proves the point."

However, the report did make its brighter points despite all the doom and gloom.

Of those with RRSPs, the survey found Canadians felt they needed to exercise more caution. Nearly 70 per cent of Canadians with RRSPs say they will not need to withdraw from it to meet their financial needs, and 60 per cent say they'll contribute as much this year as they have before.

Thirty-eight per cent, however, say they don't plan to contribute this year, believing they'll need the money to get themselves through the tough times — a state of affairs that would be more easily weathered, Thomson says, if Canadians looked for help.

"We spend more time thinking about our vacations than we do thinking about our retirement. It seems so far away, and so complicated. It's not," she said. "You can go into a bank and get free advice from the most basic to the most complex. Dealing with an investment professional helps you understand what you're buying and establish a financial knowledge of what you already have."

Money management tips online

- Want to brush up on money management? The website fcac-acfc.gc.ca, run by the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada, features a variety of useful interactive tools to educate Canadians on financial literacy. Features include a mortgage calculator, reports on credit cards, their interest rates and tips on how to manage them, and guides to banking across the country.

Maximize your contribution

Borrowing can pay. Taking out an RRSP loan can, in many circumstances, be a smart way to maximize this year's contribution or to catch up on your past contributions. The key is to get a loan at a low-interest rate and pay it back as quickly as possible. You can even use your RRSP tax savings to help pay off the loan. NEWS CANADA

Tax-free savings account has something for everyone

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

Tax-free savings — the idea sounds almost too good to be true, but it isn't. As of Jan. 1, all Canadians have access to the new tax-free savings account (TFSA), but how does it work?

Tom Hamza, president of the Investor Education Fund, a non-profit organization that promotes financial literacy across Canada, says the TFSA is meant to be a versatile partner to your RRSP, which allows you to save and take money out when you need it, tax free.

Other details about the TFSA include:

• Any Canadian over the age of 18 can open a TFSA and deposit up to $5,000 yearly into the account, regardless of your income level. RRSP contribution limits are tied to income.

• Your contribution limit grows by $5,000 yearly regardless of whether you put money into it.

• Money you earn in your TFSA doesn't count against you if you receive a government income supplement.

"This is a way to save some money and shelter the tax as the money grows," said Lee Anne Davies, head of advanced retirement strategies at RBC.

However, Davies points out that while money inside a TFSA is not taxed, the money you contribute to a TFSA is still taxable as part of your income. RRSP money, on the other hand, is tax refundable upon contribution and only gets taxed when you retire.

Hamza suggests that rather than trying to choose between a TFSA and an RRSP, use both to their full advantage.

"Anything you can do to keep money in your pocket instead of giving it to the tax person is a good thing," Hamza said.

You'll have more money growing inside your RRSP if you borrow to make the maximum yearly contribution.

Make most of savings

To make the most of the potential tax-saving and income-building advantages of your RRSPs, you should fill up every bit of your unused contribution room as quickly as you can.

Borrowing in order to contribute to your RRSPs could pay off in two ways: First, you'll increase the size of your tax refund, and second, you'll have more money growing inside your tax-deferred retirement plan.

Here's an example: Assume your RRSP contribution limit is $3,000 this tax year. Depending on your tax bracket, a $3,000 contribution could net you nearly $1,500 in tax savings in the form of a larger tax refund, while also potentially adding $30,188 to your retirement plan over 30 years (on a pre-tax basis, at an annual compound rate of eight per cent).

There are several important considerations when planning to borrow for RRSP investment purposes, such as:

• Borrow at a low-interest rate and pay off the loan quickly, otherwise the cost of borrowing can diminish your potential tax savings and investment returns.

• Financial institutions often offer RRSP loans (which are really loans meant only for the purpose of contributing to your RRSPs) at prime rate or lower.

• For top-up loans, limit the payback schedule to one or two years. For larger loans, don't exceed five years. NEWS CANADA

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Investing tip

Diversify for better, more assured growth. Because the government caps the amount you can contribute to your RRSPs, you'll likely need more income to afford the retirement of your dreams. A well-balanced portfolio is based on an asset allocation plan that matches your risk profile and time horizon. **NEWS CANADA**

Follow these RRSP dos and don'ts to maximize your savings

Contributing to your RRSP means tax-deferred savings today for money needed tomorrow. Even in tough economic times, you can maximize your savings with these dos and don'ts from TD Waterhouse:

• **DON'T** delay in starting to contribute to your RRSP. Put away as much as you can afford, as soon as you can. Even modest, regular contributions can build over the years into a significant retirement nest egg.

• **DO** maximize your contribution. Your annual RRSP contribution can greatly reduce the amount of income tax you pay in that year and the money you put away can have years of tax-deferred growth potential. If you are worried you do not have enough money to make your maximum contribution this year, consider borrowing money to contribute to your RRSP and then paying back your loan with your tax-refund.

• **DO** speak with an expert to get advice.

• **DO** contribute to a spousal RRSP. Spousal plans can be set up to split income for the purpose of saving on taxes in the retirement years. The purpose of a spousal RRSP is to shift RRSP assets to the lower income earner, so that at retirement the income from the plan is taxed at a lower marginal rate, resulting in tax savings.

NEWS CANADA

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Health & Beauty

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE COLACINO, ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

Tummy tucks on the rise

Remnants of obesity have surgeries soaring

She was a big baby. In the picture it is 1953 and her older sister Shirley is straining to hold a beaming Ruth Mathews up for the camera.

As the years unfold in her photo album, Mathews' size grows progressively larger. Then alarming.

In a 2004 shot, at age 51, Mathews is a morbidly obese diabetic and a mostly miserable 354 pounds.

Then comes the great reversal. By dint of diet, exercise and the will to eschew pizza in particular, the 5-foot-6 school bus driver shrinks to 169 pounds.

But like the growing number of morbidly obese people now losing enormous amounts of weight, mostly through stomach stapling surgeries, Mathews had a problem. As all that fat disappeared, the skin that held it all did not.

"I had all this skin that would flop around when I walked," says Mathews, the mother of two grown children. "You sort of tuck it into your pants, but it's still there. Imagine losing all the weight and having to be stuck with all that skin."

"I had all this skin that would flop around when I walked... Imagine losing all the weight and having to be stuck with all that skin."
Ruth Mathews

These remnants of obesity — known medically as cutis pleonasmus — have sent "tummy tuck" surgeries skyrocketing.

"It's been a six-fold increase in the past five years," Dr. Michael Kreidstein says of the number he now performs at The Scarborough Hospital in Ontario.

The Canadian Society of Plastic Surgeons does not keep statistics on the type and number of operations its 400 members perform, but society executive director Karyn Wagner says U.S. data likely reflects the Canadian situation.

In the U.S., tummy tucks increased by 137 per cent between 2000 and 2007, when the number reached 148,000. Wagner concludes about 15,000 were performed in this country that year.

Bariatric surgeries (known as gastric bypasses or stomach stapling), which segment or bypass large portions of the stomach, are growing as a mainstream tool to reverse morbid obesity. Last year, a major study pegged these operations as a potential cure for weight-related Type 2 diabetes.

In the U.S., tummy tucks increased by 137 per cent between 2000 and 2007. The Canadian Society of Plastic Surgeons says U.S. data likely reflects the Canadian situation.

During the procedure, the excess skin is lifted from underlying muscle tissue — on rare occasions with the help of a mini-crane that hangs over the operating table.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Sense of smell heightens for your partner

According to new research published in the Journal of Hormones and Behaviour, the more in love you are with your guy, the better the chances you'll pick his smelly armpit out of a crowd.

The research involved having women sniff the T-shirts of boyfriends, male friends and strangers who had been wearing them for a week. Women in love were able to pick out their boyfriend's body odour 5.2 out of seven tries.

The researchers call it the "deflection theory," and argue that the more in love you are with your guy, the less likely you'll identify with the body odour of a male friend or stranger and be tempted to stray.

This isn't the first research on the role smell plays in attraction. American scientist Jim Kohl has been sniffing around the relationship between sex and smells for well over a decade. He says you could like everything about someone but if you don't like the way they smell, forget it. Especially if he or she smells like someone you've turned up your nose at in the past.

"In reality," says Kohl, "we make the odour association first and the visual association thereafter." Blame it on TV — we've become a visual society, plus the fact that walking up to someone and taking a big whiff might be considered a tad impolite.

Researchers at the Smell and Taste Treatment and Research Foundation in Chicago did a study years ago that revealed that 90 per cent of patients who had lost their sense of smell as a result of head trauma had sexual dysfunction.

They then decided to test floral and perfume smells on men to see how different odours might affect sexual response. One researcher threw in a fake cinnamon bun smell for fun and surprisingly, it got the most, er, enthusiastic response. They decided to test a whole slew of food odours and discovered that most food smells tested increased penile blood flow.

Recent research shows women in love were able to pick out their boyfriend's body odour (off a T-shirt) 5.2 out of seven tries.

But, before you go spreading cinnamon toast all over your body, girls, considering the guys in the study got most turned on by pumpkin pie, researchers admit it could just be a case of feel-good nostalgia.

Kohl agrees that a big part of smell response goes back to memory and learned associations. He calls this "olfactory imprinting" and likens it to visual imprinting for a duck. "If the first thing a baby duck sees is its mother, it will follow her around. If it sees a basketball, it'll follow that. Same with olfactory imprinting."

Following this logic, if you like the smell some guy leaves on your pillow, you'll probably start following him around, too.

Josey Vogels is a sex and relationship columnist and author of five books on the subjects. For more info, visit joseyvogels.com.

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Lohan gets fussy over flight

Lindsay Lohan knows that you don't get anything if you don't ask for it. The troubled starlet was apparently denied a first-class seat on an overbooked flight out of Tampa, Fla., over the weekend, so she threw a tantrum, according to Fox News. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Entertainment

Joint bash

Ellen DeGeneres , left, and Portia de Rossi celebrated their birthdays with a joint bash Saturday, reports say. DeGeneres turned 51 on Jan. 26 and de Rossi 36 on Jan. 31. PEOPLE.COM

EDITOR: DEAN LISK, DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Fanning finds her voice

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada

When you meet Dakota Fanning, the first thing that hits you is simply how girly-but-poised the 14-year-old actress is.

One could be mistaken for thinking that's a result of growing up alongside pros like Denzel Washington and Tom Cruise, but the truth is young Fanning had that demeanour right from the start.

Still, with seven years of movie making now behind her, there is one aspect of celebrity that has eluded Fanning — the inane personal fascination with fame.

"From the very first interview I ever did, I've been asked, 'Do I have any friends?'" said Fanning during a recent interview in Los Angeles. "When I was younger, I was like, 'What does that mean? Of course I have friends'.

"I've always been confused by that question because I really want to ask, 'Do you really think that I don't have any friends?'"

Dakota Fanning, inset, lends her voice to the lead character, right, in the animated film Coraline.

For the record, she does. And while Fanning has been busy with two new movies that hit theatres this Friday — the thriller Push and the stunning animated hit Coraline — Fanning still makes time for pals at private school and cheerleading camp. It may be a double-life but one that's hard-pressed to split her personality.

"She was nine years old (when we first met about Coraline)," said the film's director, Henry Selick. "She was like pulling her hair and being a little girl but telling me in this incredibly intelligent way why she should be Coraline and what she loves about the book and I was just super impressed."

Following the stop-motion animated style of his hit The Nightmare Before Christmas, Selick brings to life the thrilling story of a bored, young tomboy who finds a mystical secret door to a dark, alternate version of her life where everyone has buttons for eyes.

Fanning was such a fan of the popular Neil Gaiman novel, she dedicated five years to voicing the lead character.

"I just loved (the character's) curiosity and admired her bravery and she's so adventurous; I think you kind of have to be (adventurous) to do what I do, the places I go and the things I try out," said Fanning. "I don't know if I'm adventurous in the way she is (but) I'm definitely more girly."

On the web

- For more Dakota Fanning news, read the Famous People Are Weird blog at metronews.ca.

Panda sweeps Annies

AWARDS Kung Fu Panda pulled out all its martial arts moves at the 36th annual Annie Awards, where it was named best animated feature.

The DreamWorks Animation feature dominated Friday's awards ceremony at UCLA's Royce Hall in Los Angeles, presented by ASIFA-Hollywood, the Los Angeles chapter of the International Animated Film Society.

Panda won the top prize over such other nominees as the critical favorites WALL-E and Waltz With Bashir and swept the feature film categories with 10 trophies, topping Pixar's Ratatouille run last year, when it earned nine Annies, including best feature.

The Panda awards parade to the winner's podium continued throughout the evening. It included a directing award for John Stevenson and Mark Osborne, writing honours for Jonathan Aibel and Glenn Berger, animated effects for Le-Ming Lawrence Lee, character animation for James Baxter and storyboarding for Jen Yuh Nelson.

Dustin Hoffman, who plays kung fu master Shifu in Panda, earned the award for voice acting in a feature film.

Nico Marlet took home an award for character design for Panda. **REUTERS**

primetime 2/3/09

VA	Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime	251	308	3 CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	Rick Mercer	22 Minutes	Wild Roses (N) (CC)		CBC News: The National (N)		(:05) The Hour
	255	358	6 JOY	E! News	The Insider	The Biggest Loser (N) (CC)				Ruby (CC)	Kimora: Fab	News (CC)
	254	-	8 M	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Omni News: Mandarin Edition		News: Cantonese Edition		Omni News: Punjabi Edition		Metropia
	250	321	9 CTV	etalk (CC)	Hollywood	American Idol (N) (CC)		(:01) Fringe (N) (CC)		Law & Order: SVU		News (N)
	-	-	10 OMNI	The Daily	Frasier (CC)	Islam 101 (CC)		Poltergeist: The Legacy		Scrubs (CC)	The Search	New Day
	252	336	11 GTV	Entertainment	ET Canada	NCIS "Agent Afloat" (CC)		90210 "Help Me, Rhonda" (N)		Project Runway Canada		News (N)
	256	389	12 VI	Instant Star	TMZ (N) (CC)	Cold Case (CC)		Law & Order (CC)		(:01) Without a Trace (N)		News (CC)
	253	359	13 CITY	Law & Order: SVU		Privileged (N) (CC)		Scrubs (N)	Scrubs (N)	Primetime: What Would		EP Daily
	-	-	14 CW	Deal-No Deal	Deal-No Deal	90210 "Help Me, Rhonda" (N)		Privileged (N) (CC)		Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Frasier (CC)
	289	381	15 CBS	Entertainment	The Insider	NCIS "Agent Afloat" (CC)		The Mentalist "Flame Red"		(:01) Without a Trace (N)		News (N)
	287	379	16 NBC	Evening Mag.	Inside Edition	The Biggest Loser (N) (CC)				Law & Order: SVU		News (N)
	602	568	19 W	Will & Grace	Friends (CC)	Extreme Celebrity Rehab (N)		Style by Jury	Style by Jury	How to Look Good Naked		Maxed Out
	288	380	21 ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Homeland Security USA (N)		Scrubs (N)	Scrubs (N)	Primetime: What Would		KOMO 4 News
	-	-	23 KVOS	M*A*S*H	Seinfeld	The Deep ★★★ (1977, Adventure) Jacqueline Bisset, Nick Nolte.					Still Standing	Scrubs (CC)
	291	383	27 PBS	Ready Digital	About-Money	Nova "The Spy Factory" (N)		Frontline (N) (CC) (DVS)		Independent Lens (N) (CC)		About Us
	290	382	28 FOX	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	American Idol (N) (CC)		(:01) Fringe (N) (CC)		News (N) (CC)		Family Guy
	-	364	43 PBS	American-Hist	Frontline (N) (CC) (DVS)		Summer Wine	Tavis Smiley	Charlie Rose (N) (CC)		Nova "The Spy Factory"	
	296	654	34 SBK	Frasier (CC)	Frasier (CC)	Punk'd (CC)	South Park	Cheers (CC)	Half & Half	The Insider	Entertainment	Foreclosure
	298	653	65 TLA	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	90210 "Help Me, Rhonda" (N)		Privileged (N) (CC)		KTLA Prime News (CC)		Friends (CC)
	295	651	36 WGN	WGN News at Nine (N) (CC)		Family Guy	Two/Half Men	According-Jim	Sex and-City	Friends (CC)	Friends (CC)	My Wife-Kids
	297	652	37 WPX	PIX News at Ten Tong. (N)		Two/Half Men	Friends (CC)	Sex and-City	According-Jim	Frasier (CC)	Frasier (CC)	Odd Couple
	199	311	76 STR	News (N)	News		Late Show-Letterman		(:37) The Biggest Loser (CC)			Will & Grace
news	502	390	26 NW	Mad Cow, Sacred Cow (N)		CBC News: The National (N)		CBC News: The National		Mad Cow, Sacred Cow (CC)		National
	500	500	33 CNN	Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)				Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)		Cooper 360
sports	407	419	22 RSP	NHL Hockey Carolina Hurricanes at Vancouver Canucks. (Live)					Sportsnet	Sportsnet Connected (Live)		Sportsnet
	400	400	30 TSN	SportsCentre	That's Hockey	SportsCentre	In This Corner	Boxing Friday Night Fights. (Taped) (CC)				SportsCentre
	411	457	49 OLN	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman (CC)		Mantracker Al and Garfield.		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman
	410	403	54 SCR	Score Tonight		Hardcore Hockey Talk		World Poker Crown		Final Score	Final Score	Final Score
	417	406	55 SC	Hot Import	Hot Import	NASCAR Pre.	Pass Time	Low Life	Low Life	Super Bikes!	Super Bikes!	Hot Import
	416	409	144 GLF	Footballers	Legends	Gol TV News		Hallo Bundesliga		Paid Program	Art of Football	Gol TV News
family	552	543	25 YTV	Adrenaline	Prank Patrol	Malcolm-Mid.	Futurama	Prank Patrol	Prank Patrol	Falcon Beach "Turn Card"		Mystery Hnt.
	555	545	50 TEL	Totally Spies	Total Drama	6TEEN	6TEEN	Futurama	American Dad	Chicken	American Dad	Moral Orel
	557	541	51 FAM	Wizards-Place	Han. Montana	Zack & Cody	Latest Buzz	Wizards-Place	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
	553	546	53 TRE	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie	Max & Ruby	Babar (CC)	Backyard	Dora-Explorer	Go, Diego, Go!	Franklin	Comfy Couch
cable variety	268	354	5 KNO	Gardens	Recreating Eden Lois Hole. (CC)			Choir (Part 3 of 5) (CC)		Rebellion: The Litvinenko Case (N) (CC)		
	575	583	20 CMT	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Three Wishes (CC)		Home Imp.	Home Imp.	Reba (CC)	Reba (CC)	Hope & Faith
	570	580	24 MM	Degrassi: TNG	Instant Star	The Shift		Pimp My Ride	Pimp My Ride	Technical Diff.	Video on Trial	Video on Trial
	600	564	29 H&G	Colin & Justin's Home Heist		Holmes on Homes (CC)		Sarah's House	Design Inc.	Pure Design	Style	Colin-Justin
	615	520	31 A&E	Manhunters	Manhunters	The Beast "Nadia" (CC)		The First 48 (CC)		The First 48 (CC)		Manhunters
	628	584	32 SPKE	Real Vice	Real Vice	Disorderly Conduct: Video		CSI: NY "Cold Reveal" (CC)		Disorderly Conduct: Video		Disorderly
	521	560	34 TLC	Toddlers & Tiaras (N) (CC)		Jon & Kate	Jon & Kate	17 Kids-Count	17 Kids-Count	Toddlers & Tiaras (CC)		Flo & Kay
	616	522	39 SHO	The Outer Limits (CC)		Mutant X (CC)		Testees (CC)	Trailer Park	The L Word Counseling. (N)		House (CC)
	620	523	40 BVO	Straight	Bravonews	Law & Order "Prejudice"		Without a Trace "Showdown"		Luna Papa ★★ (1999) Chulpan Khamatova.		
	601	562	41 SLC	End of Leash	End of Leash	ET Canada	Matchmaker	Date My Ex: Jo & Slade		Trading Spouses		Biggest Loser
	520	505	42 DIS	Toughest Race: Iditarod		Daily Planet (CC)		Destroyed	Time Warp	Toughest Race: Iditarod		How It's Made
	522	506	44 HIS	NCIS "Grace Period" (CC)		Ultimate Engineering (CC)		Ax Men "Risk and Reward"		NCIS "Grace Period" (CC)		Re-Inventors
	627	528	45 SPC	Destination Truth (N) (CC)		Stargate SG-1 (CC)		Star Trek: Next Gener.		Star Trek: Voyager "Twisted"		Star Trek: Ent.
	294	650	47 TBS	The Office	The Office	10 Items-Less	Seinfeld	Sex and-City	Sex and-City	Raymond	Raymond	10 Items-Less
	619	525	48 TROP	Planet Soap	Big Screen	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Raymond	Family Guy	Married... With	Seinfeld
	603	561	52 FN	Good Eats	Good Eats	Iron Chef America (CC)		Challenge (CC)		The F Word		Good Eats
	626	547	57 COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs (CC)		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	S. Silverman	Flt.-Conchords	Daily Show
	320	621	60 CEN	(6:20) Breakfast With Scot		Final Verdict (2009) Erica Durance. Premiere.			30 Days of Night ★★ (2007, Horror) Josh Hartnett. (CC)			
	581	566	101 MTV	A Double Shot at Love (CC)		Double Shot	MTV Live	Double Shot		A Double Shot at Love (CC)		MTV Live
	261	394	102 V	I Prophesy	Supernatural	Poltergeist: The Legacy		Kid Galahad ★★ (1962) Elvis Presley, Gig Young. (CC)				Paid Program
	-	-	109 MUL	Matchmaker	Mom's-Upset	Il Caffe		In Germany	Euromaxx	Schauplatz	Euro. Journal	Patrol World

critics'corner

Wild Roses
This is a dilemma with a capital D for Will (Steve Byers). An unsavory client is trying to put the moves on Lucy (Sarah Power). Unfortunately, the McGregors desperately need this deal. Does Will stand up for Lucy against the lecher or make nice for the sake of the family business? Elsewhere, Maggie's (Kim Huffman) new relationship is heating up in the new episode "Secrets and Lies." 9 PM on CBC

Straight Shooter: The Story of the Mamas and the Papas
The folk-pop mix of the Mamas and the Papas spawned hits that raided the music charts of the 1960s and are still popular today. Follow the story behind the music in a video biography of the highly influential band. The quadraphonic group that sprang from the new folk movement became a major part of the California pop scene. The program includes the stories behind such timeless favorites as "California Dreamin', " "Monday Monday" and "I Saw Her Again." 6 PM on BVO

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he's just *not* that into you

In Theatres February 6

ALLIANCE

Go to metronews.ca and take Metro's Sex & Relationship columnist Josey Vogels' quiz to find out which *he's just not that into you* character you are most like and you could WIN!

No purchase necessary. One entry per person. Contest open to Canadian residents of legal age, excluding residents of Quebec. Contest closes February 10, 2009. Approximate retail value of prize is $599 each. Odds of winning depend on number of entries received. For full contest rules and details, visit www.metronews.ca.

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Emma's cover-up

Though her Harry Potter costar Daniel Radcliffe has bared all for work, Emma Watson is content to remain clean-cut. "I have no plans to do anything for the sake of it, or to shock people," she told the Mail on Sunday's Live magazine. **PEOPLE.COM**

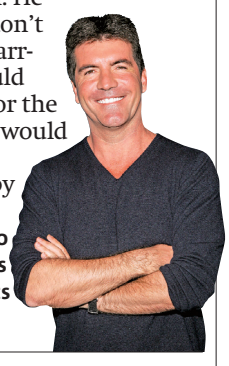
Celebrity Buzz

Simon says he's not gay — just busy

RUMOURS Simon Cowell is not gay, according to femalefirst.co.uk. The music mogul, who recently split from long-term girlfriend Terri Seymour, has laughed off rumours about his sexuality, saying he's single because he keeps "crazy hours."

"I am not gay. But in this business, if you were it wouldn't matter. It is not exactly unusual to be gay in the music business or the TV business," he says. "It is 2009, after all. So if you are, you are and if you are not, you are not."

But despite his insistence that he's straight, Cowell says he's "unlikely" to settle down. He said: "I don't think marriage would suit me or the person I would marry. I am happy single."



METRO NEWS SERVICES

Amy's parents get a say in her fortune

MONEY Amy Winehouse has turned over partial control of her $21 million US fortune to her parents. The troubled singer, who is still hiding out in St. Lucia, is looking to curb her wild spending as much as her wild ways, according to the Sunday Mirror.

"Everyone is pleased because it means Amy is listening to good advice," a source tells the newspaper. "This stops her doing anything stupid." METRO NEWS SERVICES

Teri didn't want to be a 'crazy single cat lady'

PETS Actress Teri Hatcher sleeps in the same bed as her dog, femalefirst.co.uk reports. The Desperate Housewives star recently gave an unwanted dog a new home, but admits his habits are hampering her sleep a little.

Hatcher explained: "I got a new dog. I got an American Bulldog named Jack I rescued. He's not a big shedder, but he does snore. I have to wear earplugs when he sleeps with me."

The actress, 44, whose daughter is 11-year-old Emerson Rose, already has two dogs, three cats, a rabbit, two birds and a horse at her house, and revealed she decided to get a new dog rather than a cat so she didn't look "crazy."

She added to TV show Access Hollywood: "It was so funny. My daughter wanted me to get another cat. I said, 'Honey, we can't have four cats, then I'm like the crazy single lady with all the cats.' And she goes, 'No, mom, that's five. Five is when you become the crazy single cat lady.'"

METRO NEWS SERVICES

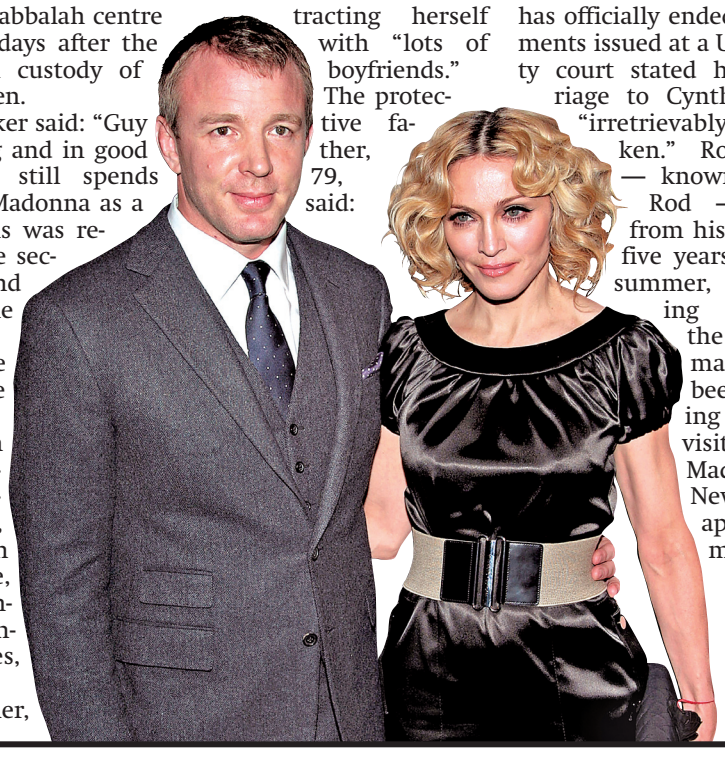
Madonna and Guy meet up in NYC

FAMILY MATTERS Madonna and Guy Ritchie have spent the weekend together in New York, femalefirst.co.uk reports. Ritchie met his ex-wife Madonna at the New York Kabbalah centre just a few days after the singer won custody of their children.

An onlooker said: "Guy was smiling and in good spirits. He still spends time with Madonna as a family." This was reportedly the second weekend in a row the estranged couple have met at the Kabbalah centre with their children: Rocco, eight, adopted son David, three, and Madonna's daughter Lourdes, 12.

Guy's father, John Ritchie, has recently said the couple is maintaining an amicable relationship because of their children, but he is delighted Madonna is distracting herself with "lots of boyfriends." The protective father, 79, said: "The worst thing would be if they reconciled."

Meanwhile, the marriage of one Madonna's reported love interests, baseball star Alex Rodriguez, has officially ended. Documents issued at a US county court stated his marriage to Cynthia was "irretrievably broken." Rodriguez — known as A-Rod — split from his wife of five years in the summer, following reports the sportsman had been dashing out for visits to Madonna's New York apartment.



METRO NEWS SERVICES

Tori's all baby talk

PARENTING Tori Spelling may have had everyone abuzz about her post-baby figure at the Byron Tracey Salon opening on Jan. 29, but the mother of two was all baby talk, intouchweekly.com reports.

"Today she said 'Mama' for the first time," Spelling told In Touch, referring to eight-month-old daughter Stella. "We were in the living room and I heard, 'Mama,' and I was like, 'Oh my God!' My heart melted."

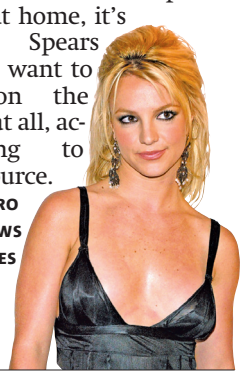
The 35-year-old actress is also back to work on the set of 90210. "It's been really fun," Spelling said. "I was really nervous the first day, but halfway through I was like, 'Wow, this feels... comfortable.'" But she admits there's been one hiccup. "I was the youngest in the cast and now I'm one of the oldest," she explained. "Jennie (Garth) told me not to say 'older.' We're supposed to say, 'One of the originals.'"

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Britney may cancel tour

CUSTODY Looks like Britney Spears may not be out on the road this summer after all. The singer is reportedly considering cancelling her tour if ex-husband Kevin Federline won't let her take her kids with her, according to TMZ.

Federline, Spears and her dad apparently worked out a deal whereby her boys would stay in Los Angeles, New Jersey or New Orleans while their mom toured nearby. And Federline was reportedly promised $4,000 US a week for allowing it, but now his lawyers are telling him it's a bad idea. If he backs out and keeps the kids at home, it's likely Spears won't want to go on the road at all, according to the source.



METRO NEWS SERVICES

Men's nipples puzzle Scarlett

BIOLOGY Scarlett Johansson is fascinated by men's nipples, femalefirst.co.uk reports. The He's Just Not That Into You actress can't understand why boys still have them, adding the concept of male nipples completely baffles her.

She is quoted by the Chicago Sun Times newspaper as saying: "The one thing I don't understand about men is nipples. I don't know if there is one aspect of men that I don't understand other than why they have nipples. Honestly, why? I guess it has something to do with the X chromosome.

"What is the function of the male nipple? Maybe we all start as androgynous creatures and then they become men?"

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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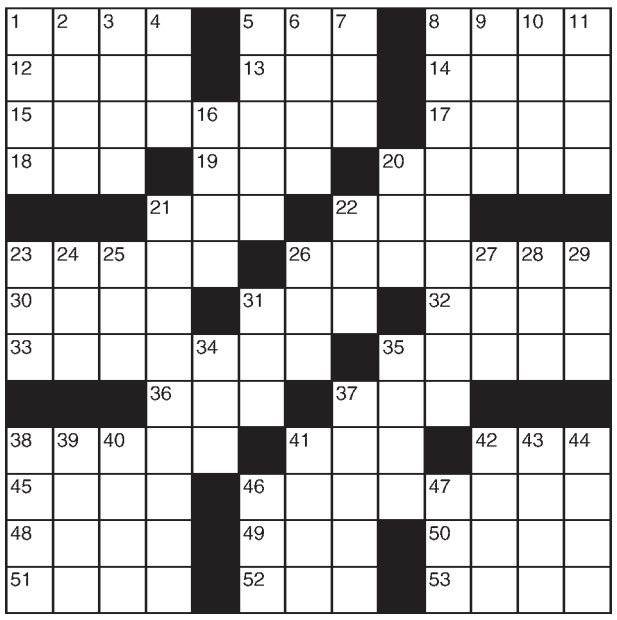
Take Five



Crossword across

1 Therefore
5 Hot tub
8 Datum
12 Honeycomb compartment
13 Coop dweller
14 Wind instrument
15 Common wintertime ailment
17 — -podrida
18 Peculiar
19 Lummox
20 Glisten
21 — for tat
22 Schoolkids' transport
23 Muscle
26 No purebred
30 German car
31 Talk and talk and talk
32 Mine, partially
33 Filled the shelves
35 Run, as colors
36 Slippery fish
37 Evil
38 Partonesque
41 Supporting
42 Mainlander's souvenir
45 Grooving on
46 Became established
48 List-ending abbr.
49 So five minutes ago
50 Basilica area
51 — & Taylor
52 Distort
53 Earl Grey's family?

Crossword down

1 Repeat performance?
2 14-Across insert
3 Satisfied
4 Antiquated
5 Young hog
6 Riches
7 Moreover
8 Iron pyrite
9 Competent
10 Pop flavour
11 Squad
16 Neologize
20 Holster contents
21 Trite
22 Short cut?
23 — -relief
24 Same old same-old
25 Bustle
26 Frenzied
27 Wish otherwise
28 Prior to
29 '60s psychedelic
31 Toothpaste, often
34 Crucial
35 Fir coat
37 Swag
38 Actress Jessica
39 "Do — others ..."
40 Celeb
41 Bridge table quorum
42 Easy bounding gait
43 "Born Free" lioness
44 Mid-month date
46 AAA job
47 Chapeau

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

		6				1		
		5	8		9	7		
7				1				6
	5	3	9		1	8	4	
	9	7	6		4	2	1	
5				3				9
		1	2		6	5		
		2				3		

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

S	A	C			A	R	T		R	I	F	F
A	G	O	G		P	E	A		I	L	I	E
R	I	M	E		T	A	B		C	L	E	W
I	N	B	O	X		P	O	O	H			
			R	I	P		O	R	A	N	G	E
F	R	A	G	I	L	E		B	R	E	A	K
L	U	R	E		Y	A	K		D	A	Z	E
O	N	I	C	E		T	E	M	P	T	E	D
P	E	D	A	L	S		W	A	R			
			R	I	P	E		P	Y	G	M	Y
P	A	U	L		I	C	H		O	R	E	O
H	I	F	I		R	H	O		R	I	N	K
I	R	O	N		E	O	N			D	U	E

5	6	8	2	9	1	3	7	4
2	1	3	5	4	7	6	9	8
7	4	9	3	6	8	5	2	1
8	2	4	7	5	6	9	1	3
1	9	5	4	2	3	8	6	7
3	7	6	8	1	9	4	5	2
6	8	1	9	3	2	7	4	5
4	3	2	6	7	5	1	8	9
9	5	7	1	8	4	2	3	6

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:

Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Spiced Lamb with Couscous

INGREDIENTS:

2 tsp (10 ml) olive oil
250 g lean boneless lamb, cubed
2 tsp (10 ml) ground coriander
2 tsp (10 ml) ground cumin
1 tsp (5 ml) ground ginger
1 1/3 cup (200 ml) vegetable juice
1/2 cup (125 ml) vegetable stock
1 tbsp (15 ml) tomato paste
1 butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cut into cubes
3 zucchini, halved lengthwise and thickly sliced
1 cup (250 ml) couscous

METHOD

1. Heat oil in large saucepan or flameproof casserole dish. Add lamb and cook over moderate heat 5 minutes, or until lamb is richly browned. Sprinkle spices into pan and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly.
2. Stir in vegetable juice, stock and tomato paste and boil. Reduce heat to simmer, cover and cook 30 minutes.
3. Stir in butternut squash and cook 5 minutes, then add zucchini. Cover and cook gently 25 minutes, or until lamb and vegetables are tender.
4. About 15 minutes before lamb is ready, prepare couscous. Cook following package instructions, then fluff with a fork.
5. Divide couscous among serving bowls and spoon lamb stew over top. Serve immediately.

SERVES 4

rd.ca

For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Your principled actions determine the outcome. A shameless schemer tells secrets. An unusual social situation causes you to feel anxious.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Don't get involved in stranger's situation that will work itself out. A rescuer steps in with advice about several choices.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Don't flame anybody just because they have bad taste. Frequent disruptions will be to your benefit.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
Someone gets bent out of shape over a love life fiasco. Be considerate of those who can't fulfil their obligations.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
Give direction when a friend gets lost in maze of emotions. Someone will drive you crazy in a very nice way.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Don't try to convert someone to your way of thinking. There's not much time left to tend to unfinished business.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
One of your allies must now move on to a better life. The least said about a tense clash, the better.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
A character flaw in someone you know will be made visible. Be alert and aware of your surroundings at all times.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
A nerve wracking nemesis forces you into making a new plan. Stubbornness causes criticism to arise.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
Be bland when you're confronted by a stranger. Increase your bliss without spending money.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
A friend's major move will alter your relationship. Desperate measures are taken when a love affair is discovered.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Allow love to break through to you. You'll refuse to be unnerved by a strange event.

WORDY GURDY®

BY TRICKY RICKY KANE

Every answer is a rhyming pair of words (like FAT CAT and DOUBLE TROUBLE), and they will fit in the letter squares. The number after the definition tells you how many syllables in each word.

1. Everyone writes fast and illegibly (1)
2. Outscore Miami's NBA team (1)
3. Dirt-free headmaster (1)
4. Mallard-filled Mack vehicle (1)
5. Lessening the amount of "Ah-choo!"-ing (2)
6. In-shape-ness observer (2)
7. 4, 5, or 6 golf club on a football field (3)

ANSWERS
1. ALL SCRAWL 2. BEAT HEAT 3. CLEAN DEAN 4. DUCK TRUCK
5. EASING SNEEZING 6. FITNESS WITNESS 7. GRIDIRON MIDIRON

2-3-09

This day in history

FEB. 3, 1917: World War I: The United States breaks off diplomatic relations with Germany a day after the former announced a new policy of unrestricted submarine warfare.
FEB. 3, 1969: In Cairo, Yasser Arafat is appointed Palestine Liberation Organization leader at the Palestinian National Congress.
FEB. 3, 1971: New York Police Officer Frank Serpico is shot during a drug bust in Brooklyn and survives to later testify against police corruption. Many believed the incident proved NYPD officers tried to kill him.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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What's happening in BC hospitals as government cuts corners?

The BC government has hired private contractors to clean our hospitals and provide food to patients. But these contractors pay low wages, creating huge staff shortages and constant turnover.

Cleaning and food services workers aren't getting the training they need. And they don't have enough supplies and equipment to keep our hospitals clean and safe.

We need government to ensure that contractors pay a living wage and provide workers with more training and supplies – for cleaner, safer hospitals.

THE TRUTH IS:

The BC government created a crisis in our hospitals. Now they need to fix it.

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